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Samuel Peters

COVER: A painting of the Reverend Samuel Andrew Peters, probably about 1787.

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THE NEW HAVEN COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY was founded in 1862 by a representative group of New Haven citizens. As stated in the Constitution adopted by the Society, revised in 1965:

"The object of the Society shall be the collection, preservation and publication of historical and genealogical matter relating to the early settlement and subsequent history, especially of New Haven and its vicinity, and incidentally of other portions of the United States."

The museum and library of the Society are open free of charge to the public. In addition to the Whitney Avenue building the Society owns the Pardee-Morris House at 325 Lighthouse Road, Morris Cove, New Haven. Built originally in 1685, it was burned during the British invasion in 1779. Rebuilt at once, it incorporates surviving portions of the older structure. The Pardee-Morris House is now restored and furnished appropriately and is open free of charge to the public during the summer months.

Samuel Peters

Yale's Peripatetic Loyalist: Samuel Andrew Peters

Sheldon S. Cohen

The nation's Bicentennial celebration evoked remembrances of the many patriots who performed illustrious service in the cause of American independence. Conversely, little attention was paid to those individuals who adopted the unsung, often reviled, course of fidelity to Great Britain. In Connecticut, the rolls of these errant Loyalists included several notables: Jared Ingersoll, Connecticut's unpopular stamp distributor; Colonel Edward Fanning, commander of the King's Regiment of Foot; and Captain William Chandler, a Yale classmate of Nathan Hale, who guided the King's forces during their destructive raid on New Haven in 1779. Of all her Tory sons, however, perhaps Connecticut's greatest embarrassment—before, during, and long after the American Revolution—was the Reverend Samuel Andrew Peters.

Samuel Peters was born in late 1735 in the eastern Connecticut hamlet of Hebron. Although his father, John Peters, had resided in Connecticut only since 1718, Sam later wrote that his forefathers "had been close observers of the colony scene for four generations," and he fraudulently claimed descent from Hugh Peters, a renowned Puritan divine. Nonetheless, John Peters was a farmer of the "better sort" in the community, so much so that he was able to provide for twelve children and send Sam off to Yale in 1753.

Four undergraduate years under the austere, dogmatic, yet turbulent administration of President Thomas Clap appear to have passed rather uneventfully for scholar Peters. A ten-pence fine for participation in an unauthorized lottery; a pedantic, rambling senior declamation on the value of time; and an academically unindicative ranking near the bottom of his class of forty are the principal memorabilia of his "bright college years." Then, a year after commencement, Sam made his choice of occupations when he embarked for England and Episcopal ordination.

The Reverend Samuel Andrew Peters's homecoming to Hebron in 1760 marked the beginning of a tempestuous fourteen-year missionary career. Although his early years of ministering were marked by some significant

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successes in increasing the number and influence of Anglican communicants within his region, Parson Peters's pompous affection for royalty, along with his marked condescension toward his predominantly Congregationalist neighbors, eventually caused his undoing. Some contention emerged in 1765 because of his avid support of the Stamp Act, but nine years later Peters's foolhardy endorsements of Parliament's Intolerable Acts and his denunciation of Governor Jonathan Trumbull proved the breaking point. A menacing patriotic mob appeared before the Hebron vicarage in August, 1774, and following a second, more destructive confrontation early the next month, the thrice-widowed parson abandoned his two children and fled to sanctuary in England.

The patriotic derision that followed this hasty flight soon intensified the exiled missionary's antagonism toward his colonial adversaries. The Revolutionary poet John Trumbull dismissed him unflatteringly as "our fag-end man, poor Parson Peters"; Yale President Ezra Stiles attacked him as "an infamous parricide"; while the *Connecticut Gazette* in 1775 mocked Sam's London audience with George III: "The Rev. Mr. Peters from Lebanon [*sic*] has obtained his Majesty's leave to pick hops at 9d per day, a penny more than the usual price as a reward for his past faithful services; and by this lucrative business it is supposed that he will soon acquire a fortune equal to that he left behind him." Stung by such derision, Peters first responded with a series of vindictive articles in *The Political Magazine*, a British periodical that focused on political polemics. Then, in 1781, he published the work that provided him enduring notoriety and controversy—*A General History of Connecticut, from its First Settlement under George Fenwick, esq. to its Latest Period of Amity with Great Britain, Including a Description of the Country and Many Curious Anecdotes.*

The History of Connecticut does contain a considerable number of accurate and interesting descriptions of the colony. On the other hand, it is replete with derision, distortion, and outright falsehoods about the residents of Parson Peters's homeland. Peters insisted, for example, that Connecticut's inhabitants were "hair-brained bigots on all sides"; that Thomas Hooker, a Puritan founder, had deliberately sent an Indian prince a contaminated Bible in order to usurp tribal lands, and that pre-Revolutionary events had shown conclusively that Connecticut's government was no different than "a mad mob in London."

Further examples of perfidy were seen in his version of Connecticut's early statutes, which Peters called "Blue Laws or Bloody Laws." While several Blue Laws were based on fact, others were distorted or ridiculous prevarications such as, "Every male shall have his hair cut round according to a cap," and, "No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath or fasting day." The parson also malevolently fabricated familial practices in Connecticut such as "scrubbing newborn infants with a mixture of honey and urine," but he did endorse the existent courtship practice of bundling: "Bundling takes place only in cold seasons of the year—The sofa is more dangerous in summer than the bed in winter—Upon the whole had I daughters now, I would venture to let them bundle upon the bed or even the sofa

after a proper education sooner than adopt the Spanish mode of forcing young people to prattle only before the lady's mother the chit-chat of artless lovers."

For all its distortions and falsehoods, the *History of Connecticut* continued to enjoy significant attention and controversy. In 1810 Yale's Professor James L. Kingsley confidently predicted the book "was doomed to oblivion," only to see the publication and widespread sale of an illustrated third edition in 1829. Its continued popularity and acceptability, even after the Civil War, led one New England minister to link Peters's birth with Benedict Arnold's as "one of the two greatest disasters that ever befell Connecticut." Another distressed parson asked, "How could a graduate of Yale College, and a minister of the gospel weave such a tissue of fables?" James Hammond Trumbull, President of the Connecticut Historical Society, deduced that the parson was obviously "mentally unbalanced" when he wrote the book, yet Peters had his defenders, and one of them even published a fourth edition in 1876.

From his London exile, Parson Peters devoted only brief, equivocal remarks to the *History of Connecticut*, and he never acknowledged authorship of the work. Most of his voluminous correspondence during his thirty-year English exile was devoted to wide-ranging topics including religion, politics, science, and education.

Samuel Peters's comments concerning his *alma mater* reveal much of his erratic temperament. In a letter to a college contemporary in 1788, he wistfully recalled the "halcyon" undergraduate days of relaxation and pipe smoking outside the college hall, but in other remarks he lamented the rigid disciplinary system of his student years. Similarly, in 1789, he wrote to the Reverend Benjamin Trumbull of North Haven, "I am glad to see *Mater Yale* flourish," yet shortly before that time he wrote to an Anglican missionary in Stamford, "Hiloh! Poor Yale, Columbia, shall rise on her fall." He also wrote wistfully to Parson Trumbull, "All the Sons of Yale love their mother, & though they have different opinions in Religion & Polity they will seek to do her good." At the same time, however, he falsely told other expatriate missionaries that because Yale's Episcopal students were toiling under religious repressions, Connecticut's Anglicans were about to found their own college. And perhaps most hypocritically, he wrote to a classmate in 1787 of "Alma Mater Yale, whose birth was in Piety," yet two years later he passed on to Benjamin Trumbull the salacious gossip that Elihu Yale, the College's famed benefactor, had married a "Copper-coloured Lady" during his governorship in India.

Yale's eminent president Ezra Stiles (1778-95) was singled out for Peters's most intense criticism of his old school. Neither man had any love for the other, but Peters proved far more vituperative in his personal attacks. The parson referred to Stiles as an "attic scholar," "a little rabbit," and "that envious crack-brained disgrace to Yale College and Connecticut," among other epithets. Yale's president, as Peters complained to Benjamin Trumbull, was assuredly bringing the college to ruin. Besides Stiles's theological tenets, Peters also questioned the

A painting of the Reverend Samuel Peters from a miniature on ivory by Purcello, New York, July, 1824.

President's administrative policies. In particular, he could not understand why Stiles forbade the sale of honorary degrees: "The poorer Scottish Colleges" were doing it, and Harvard was repaid "handsomely" for its degrees to prominent men, argued Peters; "If Dr. Styles [*sic*] shall do likewise, he will soon increase his income, and Perquisites, bringing fame to Yale University . . . no longer College."

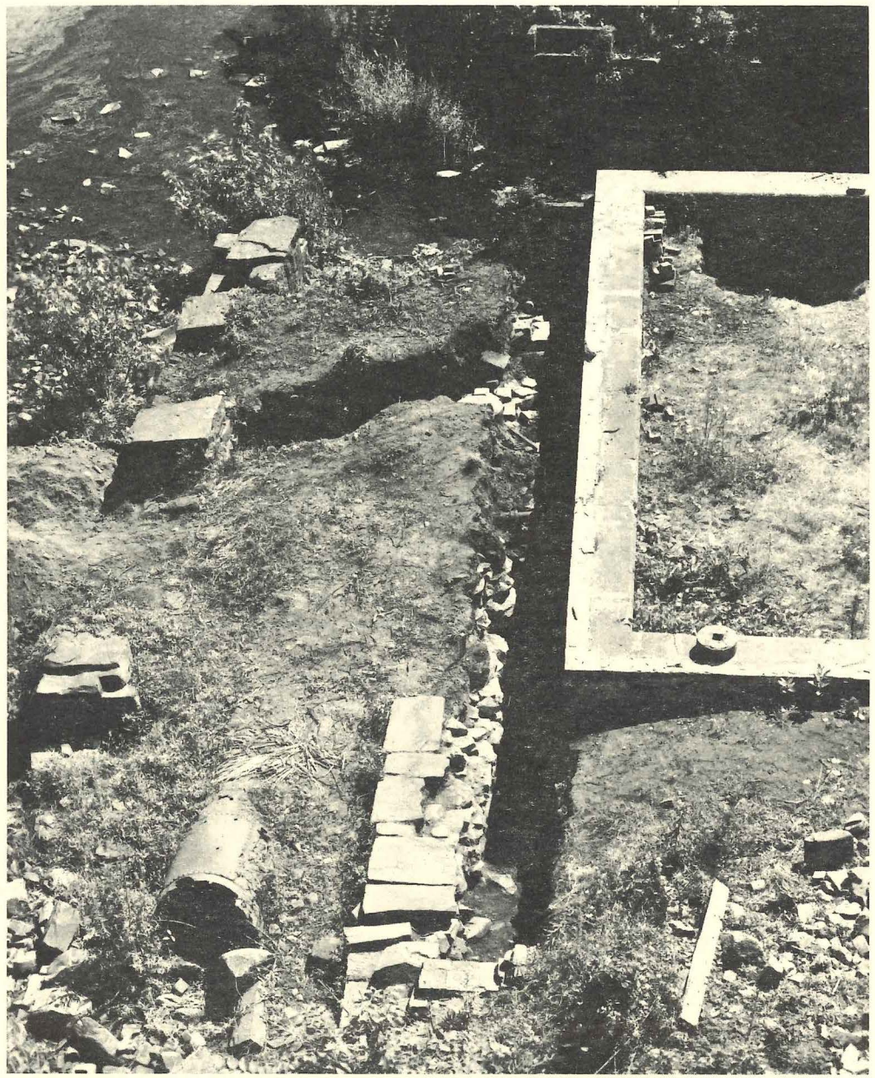
Coincidentally, the parson's own dubious claims to a doctorate also caused recriminations. When President Stiles expressed doubts concerning Peters's claim to a European degree and requested that Benjamin Trumbull obtain further information concerning its source, the parson replied indignantly, "Samuel Peters is LLD at Cortona, Tuskany [*sic*]—but I am sorry to find any Envy should occur on the account." Stiles, nonetheless, questioned the existence of any such Italian institution and added the word *alibi* after this unverified LL.D. This full title is still accorded Peters in the college annals.

Samuel Peters's English exile finally ended in the spring of 1805. The preceding year, his pension had been withdrawn by Prime Minister William Pitt, and he departed the following year with an outlandish enterprise to achieve temporal wealth and glory during his declining years. The scheme centered on Peters's part-ownership of a large land grant around present-day Minneapolis, which had been bequeathed to him by the explorer Captain John Carver. Amidst visions of a fortune in land speculation, Peters, subsequent to his arrival, made an agreement with Carver's American relatives for selling tracts of this lucrative grant. He even called the territory "Petersylvania," and, despite any corroborative Indian deeds, began to seek prospective settlers. Congress,

however, impeded the plan by refusing to confirm the grant. In 1817, the venerable former parson even made a trip as far as the Wisconsin Territory hoping to obtain his needed confirmation. Peters returned East the following year, and shortly thereafter Congress gave a final rejection to his claims.

The last years of his life were spent in loneliness, frustration, and poverty. He lived largely on charity at several addresses on New York City's Lower East Side. Most of his correspondence was with relatives in Hebron who aided his subsistence. An interesting exception was an obsequious letter to Yale's President Jeremiah Day in August, 1819, wherein the parson tried to elicit an honorary degree for his prodigal son, William Birdseye Peters. William died penniless in Alabama in 1822, and shortly thereafter his wife and daughters came to live near the elderly parson.

By this time, the infirmities of old age were finally sapping his remaining strength and energy. In a letter during the summer of 1823, he noted the gradual loss of his sight and hearing, and the fact that he lived solely on "Bread soaked in warm water." Two years later, Peters was visited by his nephew Dr. John S. Peters, a state senator and later governor of Connecticut. Affected by Sam's rapidly deteriorating condition, Dr. Peters entreated his uncle to return to Connecticut under his care. Even at age ninety, however, Samuel Peters retained his old stubborn streak, insisting, "I won't go—I'll perish first." On April 19, 1826, he carried out his promise.



The 1798 raceway in August, 1974 at the beginning of the excavation process. The following illustrations show later stages of this excavation.

Archeological Research at the Eli Whitney Factory Site

David R. Starbuck

Introduction

For the past several years, archeological and historical research has been undertaken at the site of Eli Whitney's gun factory in Hamden, Connecticut. This research effort has had as its primary goal the recovery of new evidence concerning the manufacture of firearms by Eli Whitney I, although the long-term preservation and restoration of the site itself is also considered to be of major importance.

The Whitney Armory is an excellent example of a site where historical records are markedly inadequate for shedding light on an early stage of industrial technology, and where archeology can potentially augment this incomplete record.[1] The archeological excavations at the Eli Whitney Gun Factory represent one of the first applications of "below-ground" archeology to an important industrial site in the United States. Whereas considerable historical and architectural documentation has been compiled for other early sites, very few have seen the application of rigorous archeological techniques, and probably no other site played as important a role in the development of American industry as did the Whitney Gun Factory. The eventual recovery of early machinery and gun parts (in various stages of completion) will be essential if we are to determine the technological sophistication of the manufacturing processes employed by Eli Whitney. Furthermore, the exposure of the foundations of Whitney's original buildings—as well as the exposure of structures within those foundations—is considered to be a desirable adjunct to the overall research effort.

1. Much of the historical information utilized in this report is derived from Stott, 1974. Prominent older sources which more heavily stress Whitney's lifetime and the firearms which he manufactured have been written by Fuller, 1946; Green, 1956; Mirsky and Nevins, 1952 and others.

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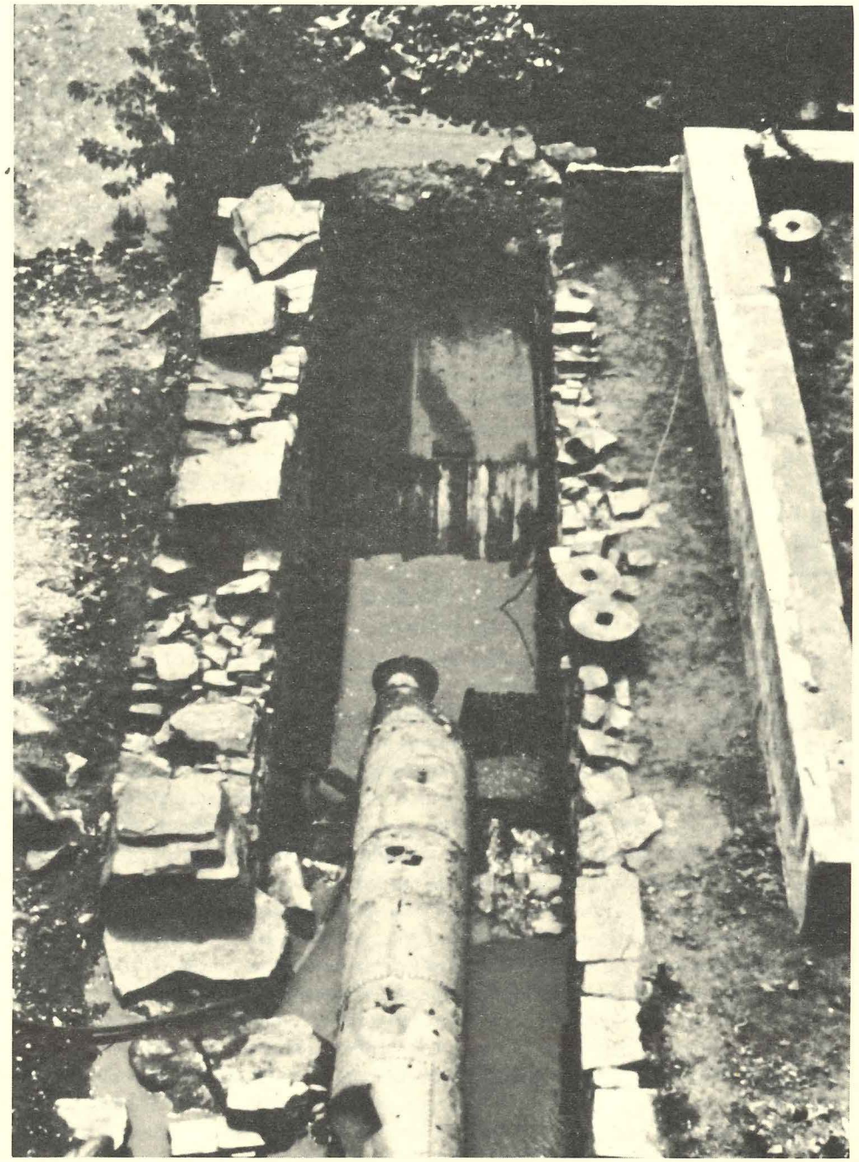
Under Whitney's direction (1798-1825), the Whitney Armory was the largest private armory in the United States, surpassed in size only by the government armories in Springfield and Harpers Ferry. Although Whitney's key role in the invention of the cotton gin is generally well supported by historical documentation, Whitney's later reluctance to reveal manufacturing details to rival armorers has led to the current dearth of information pertaining to the industrial processes employed within his factory complex. The few written references which still exist do little to support the popular belief that Whitney introduced interchangeability to the making of firearms—a belief which has been repeatedly attacked in recent years (see Battison, 1966, 1973, and Woodbury, 1960)—nor are there any known machines or molds which unquestionably date from Whitney's original factory on the Mill River. Unless significant new historical documentation is uncovered—which is improbable after the many years of research already devoted by historians to the life of Eli Whitney, then archeological field work at the actual site of Whitney's armory must become the final recourse if we are ever to understand those techniques which Whitney employed in manufacturing firearms.

The Excavations

Archeological excavations at the site of Eli Whitney's gun factory in the spring of 1972 and in the spring and summer of 1974 were intended to establish the long-term archeological potential of the site and to determine which portions of the site warranted more extensive future excavations.[2] The brief excavation in 1972 superficially tested one corner of the 1860 main armory building which had been erected by Eli Whitney II, whereas the Spring 1974 excavation sampled one portion of the factory farm, and the Summer 1974 excavation tested: 1) a larger area within the 1860 main armory; 2) limited areas within the 1798 millrace and the 1798 filing and machine shop; and 3) an extensive area within Whitney's original forge building, built in ca. 1804. As a result of this initial work, it was determined that the 1804 forge building and the 1798 millrace both had considerable potential for future excavations (both possess relatively intact early foundations), whereas the other structures on the site were either later in date or did not appear to hold as much promise for extensive excavations. In consequence, the foundations for much of the forge building were excavated in 1974 (and were subsequently backfilled), and the excavation of these foundations can probably be completed with one additional field season.

During the 1975 field season the 1798 millrace was completely excavated, and testing was also carried out in a row of Whitney's original storage sheds, built in ca. 1804, and in the area of a later foundry building (built in the 1840s), the surface of which was littered with twentieth-century garbage. Only in the case

2. This preliminary work is summarized in Starbuck, 1974.



of the foundry area was a dump site deliberately chosen in order to locate industrial refuse—in all other cases a higher priority was given to exposing foundations than to locating early artifacts or machinery. However, it was repeatedly found throughout the course of the work that construction rubble predominates within foundations, whereas most artifacts within factory foundations date either to the most recent manufacturer to use the building, or else bear no relationship whatever to *any* of the occupants of the building. This must inevitably be the case when each building has been utilized by a succession of manufacturers, and when each building was used until the twentieth century.

By the time each building was leveled and its foundations filled in with construction rubble or sterile fill, Eli Whitney I had become only a memory, and the tools or products of his work had long since been removed from the buildings he had formerly owned—replaced by the machines or garbage of later manufacturers. Future efforts to determine how Whitney manufactured armaments consequently must emphasize to a greater extent locating and excavating his original garbage dumps. Excavations to date within the factory area have failed to uncover *any* of Whitney's refuse deposits, but it is hoped that continued archeological work in surrounding areas, conducted in conjunction with additional historical research, can ultimately locate those dumps and the information they contain.

Excavations from 1972 through 1975 have been conducted within seven key buildings or areas, summarized as follows.

The 1798 Filing and Machine Shop

Built during the winter of 1798-99, the filing and machine shop was approximately 72 by 30 feet, was two stories high, and was the site of nearly all of the factory's machine work: drilling and polishing the barrels, milling, filing, and all of the steps which went into producing the finished gun parts. Although hastily erected during Whitney's first winter on the Mill River, this building functioned as the heart of the factory complex until it was destroyed by a boiler explosion in 1861. The filing and machine shop was joined on the south to a large stocking shop where the final assembly work was performed on each firearm. This later burned, in 1860, and was replaced by the 1860 main armory.

The precise location of the filing and machine shop is unclear, although it is pictured in early line drawings as being immediately adjacent to the 1798 millrace at the north end of the factory complex. Two test pits were placed within the probable location of this structure during 1974, and an additional four test pits during 1975. Recognition of the remains of the foundations has proved difficult due to the later construction of a milling shop (1860s to 1903 or 1905) on this same site, followed by a concrete dam building which was constructed here in ca. 1905 (this was subsequently razed in the 1920s).

Excavations here have meant going through recent construction rubble from the 1905 dam building, through the building's concrete floor (which is still intact), and then down to sterile subsoil underneath.

Obviously any underlying structures could pertain either to the earlier milling shop or to the original filing and machine shop, and there have been too few artifacts in association here to permit precise dating. Although large traprocks were found beneath the concrete floor in two adjacent test pits, there were no associated artifacts which could date the time of their placement here. The same dearth of artifacts was also true for two large post holes and some decayed wood flooring. It thus appears probable that the foundations—and probably also the flooring—for the original factory building were removed at some later date and that continued testing here will fail to provide more convincing evidence for the building's precise location. However, the position of the wheel pit within the 1798 millrace clearly suggests that all six test pits *were* within the factory area, even though the foundations for the factory were most likely destroyed by the placement here of later building foundations.

The 1798 Millrace

The waterworks which powered the machinery in the filing and machine shop were also constructed during the winter of 1798-99, although the historical records indicate that there were difficulties, and that they were still being worked on by the end of May in 1799. When Whitney first established his business on the Mill River, there was already a six-foot-high dam just to the north which had furnished water to earlier mills on the river (most notably that of Christopher Todd, built in ca. 1630). Whitney constructed a raceway of traprock to channel this water from the dam to a pair of wrought-iron undershot wheels (14 feet in diameter and 6 feet wide) located within the raceway's wheel pit. The power generated by the water was then transferred into the adjacent factory building.

By the 1840s water was backing up from the river on the south side of the raceway, and this was significantly slowing down the water wheels. The wheels were then raised slightly, and wooden side planking was added to better channel the water. When the present dam was constructed on the site in 1860 by Eli Whitney II, the water wheels were removed and were replaced by a turbine which received its water from the new dam through a 36-inch turbine pipe (penstock). The following year the main factory building blew up, and shortly afterwards the milling shop was built in its place, the shop being constructed over the south end of the millrace as well. The millrace continued to be functional, and the turbine it contained powered the milling shop until 1903, when the New Haven Water Company purchased the property, and the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, which had leased the property from the Whitney Arms Co. since 1887, moved out of the Whitney buildings. The milling

shop was then collapsed into the millrace, and the ca. 1905 concrete dam building was built just west of—but not over—the raceway.

Upon the commencement of excavations here in 1974, only a few of the original capstones at the top of the raceway were still visible, along with the broken-off northern end of the turbine pipe where it entered the raceway channel. Many of the stones on the sides of the raceway had been removed, whereas the channel itself was completely filled with the remains of the milling shop and with more recent fill and refuse which had subsequently been brought in to level off the area. The only archeological testing undertaken here in 1974 consisted of a narrow trench along the western edge of the west millrace wall, plus a second trench running east-west across the raceway channel. This trenching proved inconclusive due to a high water table which necessitated a halt to the excavation before the bottom of the channel could be reached. However, the tops of a few wooden side planks were located on the eastern side of the channel, suggesting that these might be a part of the original 1840s side planking.

The importance of the 1798 millrace to the original factory complex and the possibility of early artifacts at the bottom of the channel resulted in renewed efforts in 1975 to completely expose and analyze the raceway. Nearly the entire 1975 field season was spent excavating the channel, and continuous pumping made it possible to excavate completely the wheel pit at the south end of the raceway, even though a rapid flow of water from the Mill River made it impossible to complete the shallower northern end of the millrace. In order to carry out the excavation, the raceway was subdivided into successive test pits running north-south within the channel, with each pit measuring two meters north-south and from 2.7 to 3.0 meters east-west (the width of the test pits varying according to the width of the channel). Each excavation unit was taken down to either the board flooring which lay just above the bottom of the race-way channel (in the wheel pit area), or bedrock (underlying the raceway in the area just north of the wheel pit).

It was determined that nearly all of the fill from the top of the channel down to the flooring was twentieth century in origin and included large quantities of bricks, traprocks, cinders, window glass, nails, and ceramic products from the nearby Heany Industries factory building. In contrast, the surface of the floor itself was thinly covered with industrial refuse which had apparently been discarded from the milling shop—i.e., leather shoes, leather machine belts, bottles, files, etc. In addition to this thin layer of debris, there was a large concentration of hardened asphalt and bricks which lay directly atop the floor just south of the point where the turbine pipe had originally been attached to the turbine (seemingly deposited there shortly after the turbine had been removed from the channel). Much smaller lumps of asphalt were also found scattered elsewhere atop the floor boards, as well as below the floor, and in all

cases large numbers of artifacts were embedded within the asphalt. These included significant quantities of gun parts (derringer barrels, triggers, trigger guards, breeches, hammers, butt plates, sights, etc.),[3] plus a good many files, brushes, machine belts, shoes, tobacco pipe bowls and stems, bottle and window glass, several rifle cartridges, and miscellaneous machine parts. It appears that most of this debris had been discarded here by the Whitney Arms Company—rather than by Winchester—and this represents the only large concentration of gun parts found on the site thus far (and obviously they considerably postdate the musket parts manufactured here by Eli Whitney I).

The excavation along the bottom of the raceway channel revealed continuous vertical and horizontal side boards bordering heavy wooden flooring, thoroughly soaked with oil, running from the south end of the channel to a point just north of the south end of the turbine pipe, a distance of slightly over six meters. This section of flooring appears to coincide almost exactly with the original wheel pit because just north of the wooden floor the natural bedrock (which shows no signs of modification) rises sharply upwards and completely obviates a more northerly placement of the water wheels. Subsequent to the complete exposure of the flooring, these planks were temporarily removed, and the excavation was continued beneath them. Immediately below the floor was a layer of cultural material, traprocks, and earth for a depth of 60 to 70 cm., underlain by sterile sand. Most of this subfloor layer was removed, revealing that the bases of the millrace walls were only a short distance below the floor boards, the total height of each wall being approximately 2.5 meters (about 8 feet). Although a moderate number of bayonets, revolver and derringer barrels, files, machine parts, two hammers, a .22 caliber derringer, and a badly rusted revolver were all found just beneath the floor, the great majority of artifacts were domestic in origin, including tobacco pipe bowls and stems, pottery, bottle glass, buttons, and food remains. It thus appears that, when the wooden floor was added to the bottom of the millrace, fill from local refuse dumps, perhaps from the Whitney village area, was first brought in to raise the level of the floor boards above the bottom of the raceway, and then a lesser amount of industrial refuse was thrown on top just prior to the laying of the floor. Heavy wooden cross-beams were then laid down (east-west) to support the overlying floor, and finally the ends of the boards were nailed to the supporting beams. Subsequent swelling of the boards resulted in a nearly watertight floor, and this floor continues to be in an excellent state of preservation at the present time.

The north end of the raceway was considerably modified by the construction of later building foundations, but the surface of the eastern millrace wall still continues north to the base of the 1860 dam. This results in a minimum length of 18.85 meters (61 feet, 10 inches) for the raceway as a whole, but the raceway

3. Many of these parts had been designed for the Whitney Phoenix Rifle, and nearly all of them were in some way defective or incomplete.

probably extended much farther towards the north prior to the building of the present dam. Within the wheel pit area, the central channel had a width of about 2.44 to 2.49 meters (96 to 98 inches), whereas north of the wheel pit the channel narrowed significantly to about 1.90 meters (75 inches). This suggests that a relatively narrow channel had been constructed to funnel the water from the dam to the water wheels, but the width of the wheels themselves (approximately 6 feet) necessitated a widening of the channel in the wheel pit area. The later turbine was inserted into this same segment of the raceway, and ultimately it too fell into disuse once the site ceased to be used as an armory.

The 1804 Forge Building

Several years after the erection of his first factory buildings and raceway, Whitney constructed a forge building with seven bellows-operated forge platforms on the eastern side of the Mill River. The initial work appears to have been done in 1804, although later modifications were made in 1813 and 1820. A long wooden flume carried water from the dam south to the forge building where water wheels—possibly breast wheels—generated power for the bellows. Once beyond the wheels this water was channeled southwesterly through an open stone tailrace back to the Mill River. The building was subsequently modified in 1860 when the present dam was built, and a turbine with penstock replaced the earlier water wheels. Much later, sheds were added onto the sides of the building; the Acme Wire Company leased it in 1904 and made further modifications; and soon afterwards (the date is uncertain) the raceway channel was filled in, and the foundations were covered over with a thick concrete floor by Heany Industries. The superstructure subsequently burned in the 1950s, and the walls were finally leveled and the area covered with fill in the 1960s.

The forge building in its original form was pictured in very few sketches or line drawings, although numerous more recent photographs and maps portray the building in its modified form. As in the cases of the other original factory buildings, there now remain very few written sources which give any clue to the activities actually carried on within the forge. The 1826 inventory which was compiled upon Whitney's death gives a listing of the tools and machinery contained within each building, but this and other historical sources totally fail to describe the industrial processes which were carried on within.[4] In consequence,

4. The few historical references to the actual functioning of the factory all speak in extremely generalized terms. Easily the best-known statement is that contained in a letter written by ten-year-old Philos Blake, one of Whitney's nephews, to his sister Betsy Blake in September of 1801:

> "Thare is a drilling machine and a boureing machine to bour berels and a screw machine and too great large buildings, one nother shop and a stocking shop to stocking guns in, a blacksmith shop and a trip hammer shop and five hundred guns done. . . ."

test excavations were undertaken here in 1974, and—once it became clear that the original foundations were virtually intact—these excavations were greatly expanded to encompass nearly one-half of the foundations (measuring about 75 feet east-west by 37 feet north-south).

In addition to exposing at least three stone forge platforms, testing was conducted at several points within the building's central raceway and southern tailrace. It was thus determined that two separate foundations had originally been constructed for the building, with an open channel—approximately twelve feet wide and containing the water wheels—lying between the two. A single superstructure had completely covered both of the foundations and the central channel, whereas on the south side of the building the west tailrace wall originated at the southwestern corner of the western foundation, and the east tailrace wall originated at the southwestern corner of the eastern foundation. The tailrace was sufficiently wide to permit loading and unloading from barges directly into the building, possibly through large double doors on the south side of the building (the sill for these was exposed during the course of the excavation); however, no written references have yet been found which specifically mention the use of barges within the raceway.

Although the bottom of the raceway was never reached due to a high water table, it nevertheless was possible to expose the 1860 penstock (turbine pipe) as it entered the north end of the raceway and, in approximately the center of the raceway, the top of the planking which formed the western edge of the earlier wooden penstock was uncovered. Whereas a long wooden flume had originally run from the dam through the open northern end of the raceway, the end had been subsequently blocked off with a wall of stone which bridged the gap between the two foundations. The construction of this wall apparently coincided with the removal of the water wheels and the addition of the turbine, this being evidenced by the placement of the turbine pipe in the approximate center of the wall (east-west) and 1.2 meters down from the top of the wall. The non-contemporaneity of this wall with the rest of the foundations becomes especially obvious when the generally high quality of Whitney's original stonework is compared to this relatively crude later "patch" onto the foundations. Interestingly enough, the excavation of the 1798 millrace revealed relatively small and irregular wall stones, a functional but aesthetically displeasing facade, whereas the 1804 forge building had been constructed with much greater concern for its appearance. However, this may also have been a function of the later date of the forge building: the factory buildings and millrace had been hastily erected during the winter of 1798-99—Whitney himself noted a great many delays occasioned by the severity of the snowstorms, whereas the later forge building was presumably constructed under somewhat more favorable conditions.

Due to the continuous use of the forge building into the twentieth century,

there existed no suitable seal over early features or stratigraphic layers until the addition of the concrete floor by Heany Industries, probably in the 1920s. Consequently, the forge's only deep cultural deposits—in the raceway channel—are composed of relatively recent fill (loose black cinders and ashes) down to at least the depth of the water table. Because the excavation went no deeper, it was impossible to determine whether earlier deposits might lie at the base of the channel or in the tailrace outside of the building. However, just beneath the water line in the tailrace, atop broken wooden planks and amidst rotting leaves, a cache of at least a dozen gun flints was found. This evidence, coupled with the discovery of early artifacts beneath the floor in the 1798 millrace, strongly suggests that the forge building's raceway and tailrace may very well contain sizeable quantities of artifacts from the desired pre-1825 period.

Based upon our present knowledge of the forge building, its complete excavation in the future could accomplish three objectives: 1) the location of the remaining forge platforms and other structures actually involved in the forging process—it is still unknown whether the eastern forge foundation bears any resemblance to the western foundation which was exposed in 1974; 2) it would be possible to better understand the functioning of the water-power system within the raceway and its changes through time; and 3) there is at least a good possibility that the raceway and tailrace still contain artifacts from the desired time period. Due to the high water table and the considerable scale of the foundations, such an excavation could prove to be difficult and time-consuming, but it could potentially tell us more about factory-related activities than any other still-extant part of the Whitney complex.

The Fuel Storage Sheds, Powder House, Proofing House

Just east of the forge building, Whitney also erected a row of sheds, probably in 1804. Two of these were for the storage of coal and charcoal, both measuring approximately 25 by 22 feet, but the historical records fail to describe the functions of the others. A powder house and a proofing house were also built in 1803, at the request of Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, and these may well have stood within the same row of sheds. Of these various small structures only one, a fuel storage shed, is still standing at the present time (although it has been significantly altered). All of the rest were demolished soon after 1906, but their placements can still be traced from early photographs and maps.

During the 1975 field season a one-meter-wide trench was excavated for twenty-six meters in a northwest-southeast line, commencing just south of the remaining storage shed. Only alternating squares (one by two meters each) within the trench were excavated, and it was hoped that this trench would expose portions of the foundation walls for each of the demolished buildings in the original row of sheds. Along the length of the trench, only a single such foundation was uncovered, measuring three meters (north-south) by 2.3 meters

(east-west), and commencing approximately thirteen meters southeast of the storage shed. This consisted of a stone floor of loosely joined traprocks, only one stone deep, and these were joined together with mortar solely along their eastern edge. Surrounding the floor on all sides were scattered bricks, whereas just northeast of the floor was a large segment of collapsed brick wall which was still relatively intact; this had apparently been toppled over when the building was destroyed, but it clearly indicates that the building formerly had a brick superstructure. Associated artifacts gave no clue to the function of the building, but it was somewhat larger than the size which Dearborn, in 1803, had recommended to Whitney for the powder house (four feet in diameter). Consequently, there is a greater likelihood that this was the foundation for the larger proofing house where the gun barrels were tested before final assembly.

The rest of the trench contained only a few thin surface layers of cultural material, generally twentieth century in origin, but also including some coal and charcoal, which may have been scattered from the storage sheds. Most of the trench—all but the northern end—was underlain by a deep zone of naturally deposited traprocks, this entire area being part of the talus slope on the western side of East Rock. Although most of the artifacts consisted of construction material—window glass, tarpaper, and nails—there nevertheless were some artifacts of domestic origin (a ceramic doll's head, clay pipe stems, buttons, etc.) and a very few late-nineteenth-century Whitney gun parts. In view of the paucity of artifacts here, and the presence of only a single building foundation, it would appear that future testing for the remainder of the row of sheds should perhaps be confined to the *northern* side of the sole remaining shed.

The 1840s Foundry Building

The largest building to be constructed on the site after Whitney's death was a one hundred by sixty foot foundry building, located southeast of the earlier forge building. This was built, probably in the 1840s, for the casting of steel, but existing historical records are inadequate for describing either the date of construction or of demolition (probably at the same time as the row of sheds), or the processes which were employed within the foundry. This portion of the site is presently covered with trees and heavy secondary growth, while the surface of the ground is littered with the remains of an early twentieth-century dump.

A total of four test pits were placed within this area in order to locate the foundry and determine whether the refuse deposits extended back in time to the Whitney period. It is hoped that two more northerly pits were placed within the foundry, whereas the other two were deliberately placed in spots which were heavily littered with garbage. Although all four pits contained dense concentrations of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century garbage, this material was *not* underlain by earlier deposits, nor was there any evidence for the floor or foundations of the foundry building. Either the test excavations had

missed the foundry altogether, or else the flooring had been deliberately removed upon the destruction of the building. Either way, the recent date for all artifacts from this area reduces the desirability of any future excavations in this part of the site.

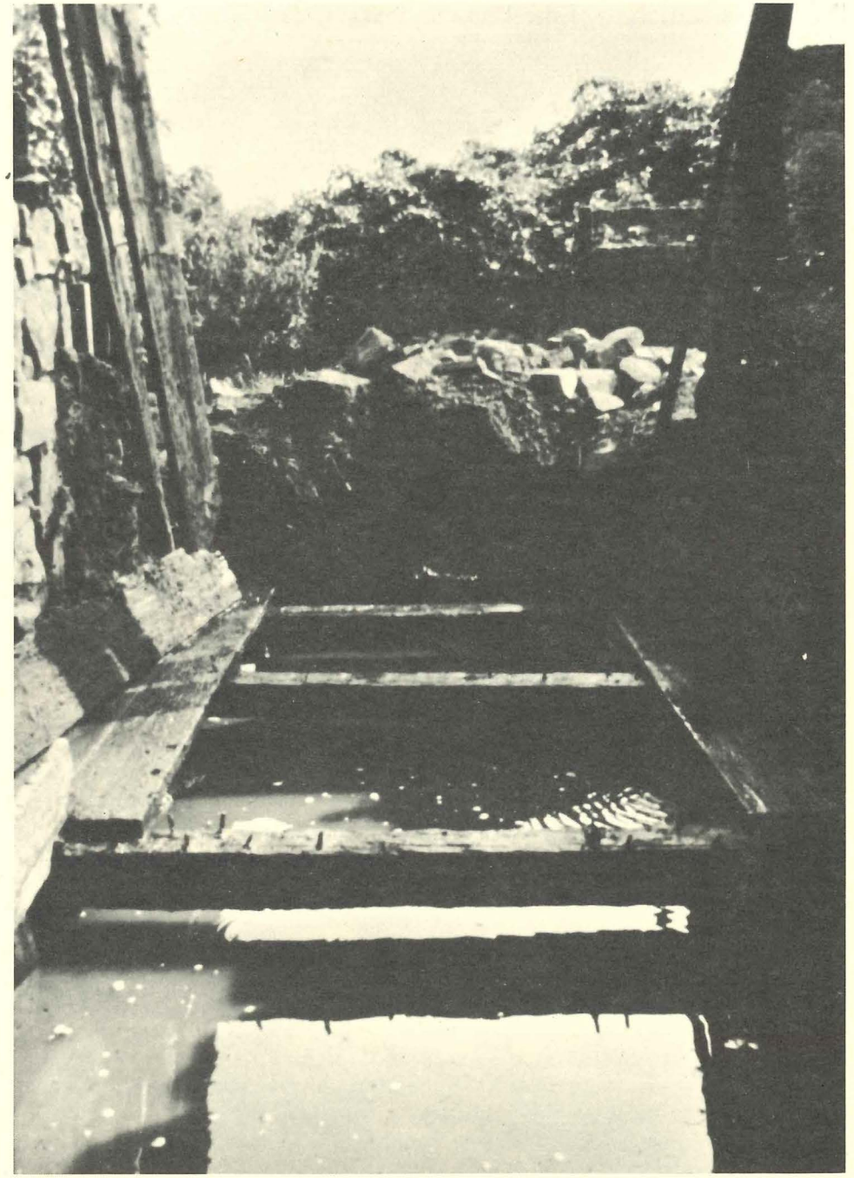
The 1860 Main Armory

In 1798 Whitney built a stocking shop just south of his filing and machine shop, and it was here where the barrels and locks were brought for the final attachment of the stocks. The date when this building was destroyed is uncertain, but it appears to have burned in 1860, after which it was promptly replaced by a one hundred by forty foot armory building. Probably completed in 1861, the armory was a two-and-one-half-story structure which employed some two hundred and forty workers at the time and to which several sheds were attached before it was finally destroyed in 1949. Although the precise location of the stocking shop, like that of the filing and machine shop, is unknown, a study of the early line drawings of the site nevertheless suggests that Eli Whitney II had built the 1860 armory approximately over the foundations of the earlier stocking shop.

In 1972 a small excavation was conducted by Richard Ellis and this author along the northern edge of the armory. This was followed in 1974 by the excavation of a two-meter-wide trench, beginning within the northwestern corner of the armory and running for ten meters westwards—crossing the western wall of the armory and ending beneath one of the later additions onto the building. Whereas numerous artifacts and a great many bricks were found within the foundations here (the superstructure had been collapsed directly into the foundations), these nevertheless did not pre-date the mid- or late-nineteenth century, and no foundations were uncovered which pertained to the earlier stocking shop. Although future excavations could easily expose the remainder of the armory building's foundations, it is rather doubtful that any sizeable portion of the stocking shop's foundations will still be found intact, and it is extremely unlikely that any artifacts from the stocking shop will still be found in this area.

The Whitney Farm

The farm area which now borders the western side of Whitney Avenue was part of the tract of land which Whitney had purchased from Daniel Talmadge in 1798. Although a barn (ca. 1815) and a one-time boarding house and school (ca. 1818) are still present on the western side of Whitney Avenue at the time that Whitney bought the property, there were an earlier house and barn here, plus a blacksmith shop. Whitney utilized all three structures upon his arrival, after which he later built his own barn—considered a model of beauty and efficiency in its day—as well as the boarding house for his unmarried workers (in which he also lived himself until he married) and the forge building, this being a considerable improvement over the earlier blacksmith shop. By the time Whitney died it



appears that all three of the Talmadge buildings were still standing, although it is doubtful that they continued to see more than minimal use.

In general, extremely little is known about the farm area—it was simply one of Whitney's many land-holdings—and much more is obviously known about the buildings than about the property itself. In the spring of 1974 a small excavation, consisting of only four test pits, was conducted in the open field west of Whitney's boarding house. These pits were placed within a clearly disturbed area, where the surface of the ground suggested a filled-in building foundation; however, the entire area was found to consist solely of recent bulldozer fill. In spite of this inauspicious beginning, the farm area may ultimately prove to be the most profitable source for both industrial and domestic refuse dumps and privy holes. The extremely poor historical documentation for this portion of the site makes it all but impossible to determine where dumping areas might have been—and the early sources were no more interested in describing where they dumped their garbage than are modern-day historians in reading about it. Even so, it is absolutely essential to locate and excavate such refuse deposits if we are ever to find and analyze machine parts or molds from the Whitney period.

The Whitney Village

Just north of the farm area Whitney built a row of five stone houses for his married workers. Located on the north side of what is now Armory Street, these extended eastward across Whitney Avenue and were later supplemented by houses built by Whitney's successors. Since then these have all been removed, and other houses now line the northern side of the street; fortunately, on the south side—in the farm area—no houses have yet been built.

No excavations have been attempted here, but privy holes and evidence for the domestic activities of Whitney's workers can potentially still be found. Little, if anything, is now known about the ordinary living activities of Whitney's workers, but excavations here will be essential if the domestic activities are ever to be tied in with the industrial activities within the overall Whitney complex.

The Artifacts

The excavation of a factory site, especially one which was in operation over a long period, will almost invariably result in the recovery of numerous samples of artifacts. However, relatively few factory sites are characterized by undisturbed assemblages of artifacts which can be dated within a narrow time range. The mixing together of noncontemporaneous artifacts and construction rubble is an especially acute problem at the Whitney Gun Factory because of the many manufacturers who succeeded Eli Whitney at the site, and because of the very late date at which most of the foundations were filled in—exceptionally large quantities of recent bricks, concrete, window glass, nails, tarpaper and ceramic products have all been mixed in with much smaller quantities of earlier artifacts.

The result is that within each building foundation the artifacts will often span up to one hundred and seventy years, with no single soil layer containing artifacts which solely pertain to the Whitney period.

It has already been noted that the bottom of the 1798 millrace, both upon and beneath the massive wooden floor, has been the best source to date of gun parts and of tools for making firearms. Consequently, most of the artifacts are from the base of the millrace. However, it must be remembered that nearly all of these date to the later Whitneys, and not to Eli Whitney I. Quite possibly the only artifacts from the millrace with a high probability of dating to Eli Whitney's lifetime are the several small grindstones which were found resting atop the western millrace wall (many of these were listed in the inventory of Whitney's estate which was compiled upon his death). These, coupled with the gun flints found in the 1804 forge building, say extremely little about the manufacture of firearms in the 1798-1825 period under study, even though we have much better artifact samples from the mid and late 1800s. This is why it is crucial for future excavations here to stress more heavily the excavation of early refuse dumps—and not just the foundations on the site. The ultimate goal of better describing and understanding the industrial processes developed within Whitney's factory complex cannot be achieved without first obtaining a much larger range of artifact types, more adequately representing the factory's broad range of industrial activities.

Summary and Future Objectives

Two complete field seasons, the summers of 1974 and 1975, have been devoted to the site of Eli Whitney's gun factory, coupled with briefer test excavations at the site in 1972 and in the spring of 1974. Most of the research thus far has been archeological in nature, although the 1974 field season consisted of an interdisciplinary project shared by a team of archeologists from Yale University working with a group of historians and architects from the Historic American Engineering Record in Washington. Many, but not all, of the Whitney records which are on file at Yale University have been researched, and much more should now be done to fill in the present outlines and to permit a better understanding of the archeological record. Furthermore, much more can potentially be done to determine where early industrial firms—and this one in particular—disposed of their garbage, and to determine where Whitney's machinery for the making of firearms was finally deposited.

Since 1972, archeology has been used to test many of the early foundations on the site, and one structure (the 1798 millrace) has now been completely excavated, whereas much of another (the 1804 forge building) was exposed in 1974. If future work is limited solely to the most important areas of the Whitney complex, then the complete exposure of the forge building and of its water-power system should be given the highest priority, coupled with some additional testing

in the neighboring storage shed area. This should be done in conjunction with testing of the non-industrial portions of the Whitney complex—the farm and village, and a special effort should be made to locate and excavate Whitney's original refuse deposits.

Although the excavations thus far have been useful from an architectural standpoint, very few artifacts which definitively date to the Whitney period have been recovered, and even fewer which pertain to firearms or to Whitney's manufacturing processes. Looking ahead, therefore, the eventual accomplishment of the major research objectives of the project will not be solely dependent upon the exposure of early foundations. Instead, future research must emphasize those things which *cannot* be learned from existing historical records or maps and which will ultimately make it possible to better understand Whitney's true role within the firearms industry and within the overall framework of the American system of manufacturing.

The research described here in preliminary form would not have been possible without the support and sponsorship of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, the New Haven Bicentennial Commission, and the National Park Service.

From Part 7 of *Greenfield Hill,* spoken by the Genius of Sound

"See the wide realm in equal shares possess'd!
How few the rich, or poor! how many bless'd!
O happy state! the state, by Heaven design'd
To rein, protect, employ, and bless mankind;
Where Competence, in full enjoyment, flows;
Where man least vice, and highest virtue, knows;
Where the mind thrives; strong nerves th' invention siring;
And daring Enterprize uplifts his wing;
Where Splendour spreads, in vain, his peacock-hues;
Where vagrant Sloth, the general hiss pursues;
Where business reigns, the universal queen;
Where none are slaves, or lords; but all are men:
No nuisant drones purloin the earner's food;
But each man's labour swells the common good."

"O state, to my lov'd sons most kindly given;
Of all their bliss, the basis laid by Heaven!
Curs'd be the heart, that wishes to destroy,
Curs'd be the hand, that mines this ground-work joy;
Hung be his name, in infamy's foul den;
And let the wide world rise, and say Amen!"

Yankee Bards: The Popularity of Epics In New Haven after the Revolution

Susan Harris

Following the Revolution, a group of New Haven poets attempted to create a national epic. Modeling their poems after the ancient and revered epic style, these Connecticut Wits reflected a contemporary expression of national pride and a search for cultural independence. In a series of poems published in the 1780s and 1790s, they treated American history as a direct result of divine intervention.

This faith in the prophetic character of historical events, together with the style of the serious epic, had been out of fashion in England for over a hundred years. When the last great English epic, Milton's *Paradise Lost,* was written during the English Civil Wars, both sides still had faith in the connection between scripture and history. The connection between England and Eden was a real one for many of Milton's readers. But after the Restoration in 1660, when events did not confirm the connection, faith in the continuity between scripture and history was lost in England. This faith was still alive in the Puritan culture in America. In fact, belief in the divine character of local history and heroes climaxed in New Haven after the Revolution with epic poetry.

The Connecticut Wits, with no poetic tradition behind them, at first began to imitate the satiric style popular in England at the time. As their styles evolved, an epic vision foreign to their English and American contemporaries developed. Whereas John Trumbull's *M'Fingal* was at best a mere adaptation of Popean satire to American issues, his epic style was more original and important in the *Anarchiad.* Written with David Humphreys, Joel Barlow and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, the poem was published serially in the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* in 1786. As the preface to the 1861 edition says, it was intended to be "a mock critical account of a pretended ancient epic poem."

The Connecticut Wits claimed, ironically, to have found the *Anarchiad* amongst ruins and restored it into the fragments that were printed in the journal:

> Among the relics of antiquity, I was overjoyed to find a folio manuscript which appeared to contain an epic poem complete, and as I am passionately fond of poetry, ancient as well as

> modern, I set myself instantly to cleanse it from the extraneous concretions with which it was in some parts enveloped, defaced and rendered illegible.[1]

At some points, the writers' claims for the poems were deliberately outrageous:

> I might also add that it appears from incontestible proofs that this work was well known to the ancients, and that as it is the most perfect, it has undoubtedly been the model for all subsequent epic productions. Perhaps in a future essay, I shall attempt to proove [*sic*] that Homer, Vergil and Milton have borrowed many of their capitol beauties from it.[2]

Still, its readers took it seriously. New Haveners are reported to have believed that this ancient New England epic had existed. They were ripe for trusting that their presence in the promised land had been prophesied by an old bard, joke or no joke.

In the poem, American heroes, events and controversies are played out by the gods, demonstrating faith in the connection between current events and scripture. This faith, rampant in the preachings of the Puritan divines, had lived through generations and was now responsible for a wholly unique type of poetry in New Haven. The connection of scripture with history was something Trumbull had neither intended nor achieved in *M'Fingal.* But in the *Anarchiad,* history is part of a divine revelation, and whether Trumbull and his friends were jesting or not, they succeeded at points in rendering a New England epic. While the spirit of anarchy was indeed being mocked, Federalist values were defining themselves, and all was unfolding in a fragmented pageant of imagined prophecy. If an epic tradition did not exist in America, it would have to be invented; with the *Anarchiad* the Connecticut Wits fulfilled a basic need of the new nation: the establishment of an imaginary tradition.

It was Timothy Dwight who most seriously attempted to establish this tradition as real rather than imaginary. The connection between scripture and history was alive to the preacher and grandson of Jonathan Edwards throughout his career. In a sermon preached at Stamford in 1777, parallels between America and Israel which were so popular with his Puritan ancestors were constantly drawn. Perhaps the best example of the persistence of this Puritan belief regarding the relevance of scripture is the title of a speech delivered in New

1. David Humphreys, Joel Barlow, John Trumbull and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, *The Anarchiad: A New England Poem,* Luther G. Riggs, ed. (New Haven: Thomas Pease, 1962), p. 5.

2. Riggs, *Ibid.,* p. 6.

3. Timothy Dwight, *Greenfield Hill, a poem in Seven Parts* (New York: Childs and Swaine, 1794), p. 20.

Haven in 1793: "A Discourse Concerning the Genuineness and Authenticity of the New Testament." Dwight's first epic poem is based entirely on this attitude towards scripture. Written in 1785, *The Conquest of Canaan* is a biblical narrative in eleven books and has been hailed as the first American epic. In the poem, Dwight transforms scripture not just into drama, but into American drama. Canaan is Canaan, Connecticut, as well as Canaan, Israel, and though he lapses explicitly only twice into episodes from Connecticut history, Dwight's characterization and scenery are blatantly American. In fact, many readers of the poem are reported to have mistaken Dwight's hero, Joshua, for George Washington.

Virtually no one was writing long poems connecting current events and scripture in the 1780s. The victory of the Revolution made history seem more prophetic than ever to Americans, and through Timothy Dwight's conservative optimism, the epic machinery was revived in an entirely American context.

The archaic nature of the mode is not without its drawbacks in *The Conquest of Canaan.* The poem is choppy. Scripture and history come together abruptly rather than smoothly, and one may only speculate upon the reasons for this. It seems that at times, Dwight was not really comfortable with the weighty analogy he was trying to draw, that perhaps his vision of America as promised land was troubled. It seems at other times that he was carried away with this analogy, almost beside himself, and that his vigorous faith was consistently affirming his vision without hesitation.

When Dwight chose to dramatize an episode from Connecticut history, rather than from scripture in his second epic, *Greenfield Hill,* completed in 1794, he had better control over his materials, and new problems arose. He managed to integrate the British invasion of Fairfield with scriptural revelation. The Poet seems thoroughly convinced that the events at Greenfield Hill and in Connecticut were acts of providence. This coherence, together with Dwight's handling of Miltonic free verse, gives *Greenfield Hill* some respectable passages of poetry. The verse is good and the vision is integrated. Still, there is a peculiar clumsiness. Dwight's vision is outdated, so that the poem is not only a freak in literary history, but the representation of a schizophrenic historic consciousness. Archaic epic tendencies join contemporary New Haven's interest in progress and industry. American commerce and politics represented the new millennium for Dwight. It is this heterogeneous character—the union of theological and commercial ideals—that makes *Greenfield Hill* somewhat awkward to the modern reader. After a discussion of the providential restoration of peace and purity, Dwight proclaimed:

> . . . while o'er thy waves
> Unceasing commerce wings her countless sails.

Timothy Dwight's vision was unique in its almost nostalgic return to a style of the past, trying to accommodate the trends of the future. Dwight, representative

of the New Haven poets after the Revolution, was trying to establish a cultural past, and at the same time he was struggling to give that past a practical meaning for the future.

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